

Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program

CAREGIVER STRESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

The following is a list of statements that reflect how people sometimes feel when taking care of another person. After each statement, indicate how often you feel that way: never, rarely, sometimes, quite frequently, or nearly always. There are no right or wrong answers.

QUESTIONS: "Do you feel..."	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite Frequently	Nearly Always
1. ...that your loved one asks for more help than he/she needs?					
2. ...that because of the time you spend with your loved one that you don't have enough time for yourself?					
3. ...stressed between caring for your loved one and meeting other family or work responsibilities?					
4. ...embarrassed by your loved one's behavior?					
5. ...angry when you are near your loved one?					
6. ...that caring for your loved one currently affects your relationship with other family members or friends in a negative way?					
7. ...afraid of what the future holds for your loved one?					
8. ...your loved one is dependent on you?					
9. ... your health has suffered because of your involvement with your loved one?					
10. ... that you don't have as much privacy as you would like because of your loved one?					
11. ... that your social life has suffered because of you are caring for your loved one?					
12. ... uncomfortable about having friends over because you are caring for your loved one?					
13. ... that your loved one seems to expect you to take care of him/her as if you were the only one he/she could depend on?					
14. ... that you don't have enough money to care for your loved one in addition to the rest of your expenses?					
15. ... that you will be unable to take care of your loved one much longer?					
16. ... you have lost control of your life?					
17. ... you want to leave the care of your loved one to someone else?					
18. ... you should do more for your loved one?					
19. ... you could do a better job in caring for your loved one?					
20. ... burdened caring for your loved one?					
Total responses per column					
Multiply each column total by scale: Never = 0, Rarely = 1, Sometimes = 2, Quite Frequently = 3, Nearly Always = 4					
Grand total:					

SCORING:

0-20 = Little/No Stress
41-60 = Moderate/Severe Stress

21-40 = Mild/Moderate Stress
61-80 = Severe Stress

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Below are some suggestions if you need help coping with the stress of caregiving.

Ask for and accept help. Make a list of what needs to be done then check off what you can reasonably do, decide what's realistic for family and friends to do and find out about services an agency can provide. When you ask for help, use the list and be specific. Know that many may like to help but do not know what you need.

Make time for yourself. Rest when the person you are caring for rests, or do something special for yourself.

Take a break from caregiving. Explore respite programs in your community. Learn about respite options, such as in-home respite or adult day care centers.

Exercise. Take a walk. Try an exercise video. Check out exercise classes through community centers, gyms and senior centers. Explore yoga, tai chi or other non-traditional exercise programs. Ask a friend, neighbor, or family member to stay with your loved one while you go out for a walk, or do any exercise routine that you enjoy.

Attend a support group. There are many different kinds of support groups. Some are small and intimate; others are more formal with speakers and presentations. Try different groups until you find one that meets your needs. It is common for family members and caregivers to experience feelings of isolation, anger, helplessness, embarrassment, grief, guilt, jealousy, frustration, fear, resentment and panic. A support group is a place where you can share concerns and express your grief with others who are experiencing the same feelings.

Take care of yourself. Keep your own appointments with your physician, dentist, counselor, etc.

Laugh. Don't lose your sense of humor. Rent a movie or watch a TV program that makes you laugh. Read a funny book. Humor can work wonders for relieving stress.

Be gentle with yourself. Acknowledge your limitations. Take time to remind yourself of the value of what you are doing. If you are trying a new caregiving strategy, do not expect yourself to do it perfectly right away.

Make a list of your own stress relievers. Keep it in a handy place and use it!

Call 1-(800) AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636) or visit www.800ageinfo.com. Elder care and caregiver professionals are ready to respond to your questions about services and supports to help you care for your loved one.

Call today. You don't have to do it alone.